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The board in Berlin this October

EFHOH President letter

Dear Members and EFHOH Newsletter Readers,

Warm greetings from the EFHOH board! In December, we hope that you will have a nice winter and a warm holiday season with your family and friends. I particularly like the winter time for reading at home by the fireplace with a book, newspapers, magazines and other publications such as the EFHOH newsletter. It is full of inspiring and interesting articles about different topics that give me some ideas for a beautiful start on the new year of 2018.

As the EFHOH board we are very happy with all the support that we have received from you as a member, our sponsors, and the volunteers who made the new website and the EFHOH newsletter. Thank you!

Also, vielen Dank to the board of DSB and the wonderful conference team for organising the 4th IFHOH Accessibility Conference on Hearing Loops & Hearing Technology "Future Loops" in Berlin last October. It was very interesting to attend with more than 300 participants and listen to the different presentations. You can download the conference statement from our website at: <http://bit.ly/2zFqmio>. The statement stressed the importance of hearing loops for large venues in order to provide accessibility for Hard of Hearing People, the importance of the T-coil in hearing aids, and the need for international standards for any new developments in accessibility systems for large venues. You can read more about this and the conference in the different articles in the EFHOH newsletter.



EFHOH was also represented by our vice president Lidia Best at the European Audiologist of the Year 2017 event. The winner of 2017 is audiologist Robert Beiny of the Hearing Healthcare Practice in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom. The Rayovac Audiologist of the Year competition is run in conjunction with Audio Infos, EHIMA and EFHOH. On our EFHOH website you can read/download the News Release available in English, German, French, Swedish and Spanish. We hope that in 2018 more EFHOH member countries participate in this competition.

For my professional work, I was at a conference last week at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. The title of the conference was Returning to Work After Common Mental Disorders and it was about the perspectives of workers, mental health professionals, occupational health professionals, general physicians and managers. See also www.iosh.co.uk/rtwmentalhealth.

On the train ride back home, I was thinking about the topic of the conference as it is also comparable to people with hearing loss and other problems. People with hearing loss also need a safe, welcoming, and stigma-free work environment. The co-operation between hearing loss

professionals, occupational health professionals, general practitioners, managers, and Hard of Hearing People is also very important.

In that case, I am very happy that we as Hoormij/NVVS (Dutch Organisation of Hard of Hearing People) have made a special website about Work and the Hard of Hearing. See also: www.hoorwerkwijzer.nl. The website is in Dutch but it gives you some information about prevention, diagnosis, finding a job, understanding, communication, energy, safety, and the workplace. It is very important that Hard of Hearing People have the possibility to work barrier-free and have the facilities at work that they need to assist them.

Coming Soon ... New EFHOH Website Launch:

We are putting the finishing touches on the newly redesigned EFHOH website and are aiming to launch it at the end of November. We hope that you will like the new design and improved navigation that will allow you to find the information that you need more quickly and easily. We look forward to providing regular updates on the website about EFHOH's work and continue to raise awareness of hearing loss and its impact on the general public.

FOLLOW US:

We invite you to follow EFHOH via Facebook and Twitter.

Our Twitter addresses are:

EFHOH	@efhoh
Marcel Bobeldijk	@marbob32
Lidia Best	@best_lidia
EDF	@MyEDF

CALL FOR ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT EFHOH NEWSLETTER:

If you have an article for one of the next EFHOH newsletters in 2018, please send it to us. You can also send your article directly to our editor Niels-Henrik, his email address is nhmh@learring.aau.dk

SAVE THE DATE:

- 11-12 May 2018 Conference "Accessibility Removes All Barriers" + EFHOH AGM and IFHOH BGM: <http://bit.ly/2zCVnTP>
- IVSS Churchear International Conference 13-17 September 2018 in Strasbourg, France: <http://bit.ly/2jkHiXc>

Dear All,

On behalf of the EFHOH board I wish you all, together with your family and friends, a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Successful 2018!

Warm Regards,

Marcel Bobeldijk

Marcell and Aida in Madrid.



The Coalition on Hearing loss and Disability demands concrete actions to tackle hearing loss and improve access to hearing technologies



"Innovative hearing devices, such as cochlear implants, can make a real change in the lives of people with severe hearing loss. We must ensure access to these technologies to overcome any barrier to communication and quality of life"

John Bowis, Health First Europe Honorary President

November 30, 2017

Health First Europe, the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH), the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), AGE Platform Europe, Euro CIU, the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA), the Ear Foundation and the International Federation of Otorhinolaryngological Societies (IFOS) join hands to promote actions to tackle the impacts of hearing loss and improve access to hearing devices.

Our Coalition aims to raise awareness among European policy-makers on the social and economic impact of hearing loss and, therefore, to facilitate the adoption of "ad-hoc" effective policies. For this purpose, today **the Coalition presents for the first time the Manifesto on Hearing Loss and Disability**: throughout its calls for action, we want to protect the participation of people with hearing loss in their communities as well as stress the need to develop a concrete strategy for hearing care into primary health care system.

In Europe 10% of the total population (52 million people) self-report to experience hearing loss, 73% consult a medical professional, but only 50% are referred to hearing care professionals.

Mark Laureyns, AEA President, remarks that *"Hearing loss is a huge problem for the health of Europe's citizens: this disability puts huge pressure on Europe's social care systems if left untreated. It is time to act to improve access to innovative hearing technologies and professional hearing care!"*

"Together we have produced the Manifesto to ensure that the needs of persons with hearing loss are at the heart of public policies: EU institutions are called to take the lead in ensuring that access to professional hearing care is a right and to develop a European strategy on hearing loss focused on equality, prevention and rehabilitation", said **Marcel Bobeldijk, EFHOH President**.

"As Europe's population ages, the burden of hearing loss will increase. We must act to protect older people's rights and promote their participation in society!" **Anne-Sophie Parent, Sec. Gen. AGE Platform Europe**

Teresa Amat, Euro-CIU President, commented *"in line with the principles of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the EU should take the lead in ensuring access specify our collective to assistive technologies such as cochlear implants and enhancing participation and inclusion to our group as citizens with full rights in our society".*

You can download the Manifesto and read our calls for action here.

We welcome anyone who supports our goals to promote the Manifesto and to spread our message!

Follow our campaign on Twitter and LinkedIn #TogetherToHear

For more information, please contact: info@healthfirsteurope.org

Melina Raso

Executive Director

60, Rue du Trône, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0)2 626 1999

Aida Regel Poulsen, EFHOH secretary



The photographer is Stephan Wilke, DSB. (Apart from the last photo, where Marcel is signing, that is by Juha Hietala, Finland).

"TO LOOP OR NOT TO LOOP"

The 4th International Accessibility Conference "Future Loops" took place from 6th to 8th of October 2017 in Berlin, Germany, and had 400 attendees at the Hotel Steglitz.

As we all arrived on Thursday 5th, a storm hit the North of Germany, but our hosts, DSB (Deutscher Schwerhörigenbund) and IFHOH (International Federation of Hard of Hearing) seemed to be ahead of it all and found new ways of solving things when e.g. speech to text interpreters, STTI, were stuck on the train somewhere.

Because of the big interest in our accessibility in the future, DSB and IFHOH had received quite a number of suggested presentations and by having two conference rooms working in parallel to one another, the program offered a variety on different angles on technology, needs and use of standards, everyday life and experience. <http://www.schwerhoerigen-netz.de/IFHOH-2017/english>

Both rooms were accessible by loop – in one room we used neck loops, in the other room a fixed loop had been installed. In both rooms there was also STTI, in the bigger



The venue in Berlin.



IFHOH and DSB Conference Statement

October 7, 2017

Accessibility for Hard of Hearing Persons in Large Venues

Initiated by the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People and hosted by Deutscher Schwerhörigenbund e.V., the 4th International Accessibility Conference on Hearing Loops and Hearing Technology, "Future Loops", is taking place on October 6-7, in Berlin, Germany. This conference is about hearing technologies for hard of hearing persons with a special focus on hearing accessibility in large venues.

There are more than 360 million hard-of-hearing persons in the world with disabling hearing-loss, according to the World Health Organization. Many hard-of-hearing persons use hearing-aids or cochlear-implants. Almost all of them have difficulties hearing in large venues.

Many hearing-aids and cochlear-implants include the proven telecoil technology that works with hearing loops in large venues. Therefore, hearing loops are recommended in any large venue to provide accessibility for hard of hearing persons. As well, the Telecoil has to be included and activated in every hearing aid and to work in parallel to any new technology.

The "Future Loops", as we call this conference, is also about the development of improved accessibility systems in large venues. Important characteristics for these systems are: Several audio stereo channels, high sound quality, high immunity to interferences, low audio latency and several text channels for captions.

Manufacturers of hearing-aids, cochlear-implants, smartphones, telephones and all kind of wireless assistive-listening-devices, together with communications standards institutions, and organizations of hard of hearing people, need to come up with a standard for this improved accessibility systems for hard of hearing persons in large venues.

IFHOH is an international, non-governmental organization, registered in Germany with over 40 national member organizations from most regions of the world. IFHOH and the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) work to promote greater understanding of hearing loss issues and to improve access for hard of hearing people. IFHOH has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), affiliation with the World Health Organization, and membership in the International Disability Alliance. For more information go to IFHOH's website: www.ifhoh.org

The association Deutscher Schwerhörigenbund (DSB) is one of the oldest German disabled rights organization in Germany, founded in the year 1901 by Margarethe von Witzleben in Berlin, the first hearing impairment association worldwide. The association's focus is on representing the interests of hearing impaired and profoundly deaf people with the aim to obtain equal participation in social life, and on helping people to help themselves. Find out more at www.schwerhoerigen-netz.de

For more information contact:

DSB: dsb@schwerhoerigen-netz.de

IFHOH: info@ifhoh.org

EFHOH: office@efhoh.org

V1.1

A copy of the conference statement.



The different presidents (DSB, IFHOH and EFHOH) signing the conference statement



conference room in both German and English, in the smaller room in English.

During breaks the participants could visit exhibitions from many different companies showing the newest things within loops; other wireless assistive listening devices; how to measure the magnetic field of loops; a sign showing a loop is installed and working; artificial intelligence within speech to text; access to telephone etc.

The big question is still, if loops are necessary for people with hearing loss.

During these two very informative conference days with a huge variety of speakers and panel discussions, we learned, that loops and tele coils are still going strong and that we do need tele coils in our Has/CIs as most clearly stated in Washington Declaration 2016 <https://www.ifhoh.org/wd-2016>

During the conference we could all participate using tele coils and loop.

Loop is standardised according to IEC, which no other ALS is so far. But we do of course hope we can have standardisation on different wireless ALS soon as well.

Loop is universal, which no wireless ALS is. To have a universal ALS where as many HA-users and CI-users can participate and attend at the same time is of huge value to both us and speakers at meetings/conferences but also at venues likes theatres, cinemas et al.

Additional wireless ALS we may need linking up to computer, telephone, GPS, iPod – all personal/individual equipment.

But it is worth noticing, that wireless ALS connect the individual to a communication which is not in the same

acoustic as the listener or it enables listening individually to music or directions from your GPS. In these situations delay may not be of so big importance, which is still a challenge in developing wireless ALS via Bluetooth, Wifi, streaming or FM even.

It is worth noticing during a Loop Conference, that the only technology that proved to work for all participants with hearing loss at the same time was in fact the loop system.

For future Loop Conferences presenting the new wireless products it would be much appreciated by attendees if the presentations could actually take us through a demonstration of how to use this new technology and have us experience how it works with all the different brands of HAs and CIs, we have been equipped with.

There is no doubt the participants with hearing loss in a Loops Conference are professionals in using ALS and we also are aware the challenges these upcoming new technologies are facing in delay, universal use and the cost.

The conference was closed by IFHOH, DSB and EFHOH signing a conference statement.

The Future Loops Conference was nicely framed in social arrangements with an opening ceremony, a guided bus tour and a tapas dinner in Sony House on Postdammer Platz on the first night of the conference and a farewell dinner at the Steglitz Hotel.

Thank you IFHOH and DSB and all your volunteers and helpers for setting up this great and important event.

Written by Aida Regel Poulsen, EFHOH Secretary.



The Berlin Statement Left to right Dr. Harald Seidler, DSB; Dr. Ruth Warick, IFHOH; Marcel Bobeldijk, EFHOH

Future Loops Conference in Berlin a Success

Close to 350 people attended the International Accessibility Conference on Hearing Loops and Hearing Technology in Berlin Oct. 5-7 2017. The conference was sponsored by the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) and Deutscher Schwerhörigenbund e.V. DSB with AKTION MENSCH as the major financial sponsor and EFHOH as an active participant on the conference liaison committee. Even a heavy windstorm on the Wednesday preceding the conference did not detract from attendance or spirits for the two intense days focused on hearing loops, the latest technological challenges and potential developments.

I am pleased that a Berlin Statement, signed by IFHOH, EFHOH and DSB, was adopted at the conference. The Statement stressed the importance of hearing loops for large venues to provide accessibility for hard of hearing persons, the importance of the telecoil in hearing aids, and the need for standards for any new developments in accessibility systems for large venues.

Another milestone was the establishment of a Steering Committee including the newly formed International Hearing Loop Manufacturers Association, DSB, EFHOH and IFHOH to keep the momentum going for make the planet more hearing accessible.

Berlin was the site of conference number four on hearing loops and a debt of gratitude goes to DSB for their excellent organization acumen in pulling off the conference. Special thanks go to Dr. Harald Seidler DSB President, Renate Weller, Vice-President, Dr. Hannes Seidler (no relation to Harald!), Gudrun Brendel, Sascha Albrecht, Elke Männchen, Claire Landesmann and Matthias Schefee.

The first hearing loops conference was held at Winthur, Switzerland in 2009, and was the brainchild of long-time advocate and former EFHOH board member Siegfried Karg. The second hearing loop conference was held in Washington DC in 2011 and the third one in Eastbourne, UK in 2013.

I was privileged to attend the last three conferences and plan to be at conference number five. Yes, we will be planning for a fifth one and I invite anyone interested in becoming involved or hosting the conference to contact me at president@ifhoh.org.

I have said it before but it bears repeating about how essential technology is for hard of hearing persons. My world was one of limited sound for the first 11 years of my life until I got my first hearing aid. That was the beginning of a transformation for a child who struggled to learn, who could not hear in group situations and who was unable to speak properly to the point of being teased about it. The transformation did not happen overnight but it continued as I underwent developmental milestones and discovered additional technology such as an FM system, obtained at age 24 to help me hear in workplace settings. I also became acquainted with hearing loops through my involvement with the hard of hearing movement which began in my early 20s.

We have come far since then but still have a long ways to go to create a fully hearing accessible world. Conferences such as Future Loops bring us together to learn from each other about our current state of knowledge and to expand our thinking of future possibilities. In the process, we energize and motivate each other by our enthusiasm. We get

to be ourselves with others who are like us in a way that is not possible in any other setting.

So, look for more information about Future Loops No. 5 in the coming months. Meanwhile, please join us at the 2018 Conference on Accessibility Removes All Barriers on Friday, May 11th and participate in the IFHOH biennial general meeting and EFHOH AGM on Saturday, May 12. Go to www.zveza-gns.si or the IFHOH website for more information.

I would like to close with a note of appreciation for the fine and hard work of the IFHOH board including EFHOH President Marcel Bobeldijk, Vice-President Avi Blau, General Secretary Louise Carroll, Treasurer Heikki Niemi and Board Member Patrick Gift Egessa.

With warmest regards,
Dr. Ruth Warick
IFHOH President
president@ifhoh.org

The American delegation to the conference in Berlin.





My **experience** as a **volunteer**

I have been asked to write about my time working with the DSB to help develop and organize their conference. How did that come about? Me, living in Vienna, Austria, volunteering in the development and organization of a conference on Hearing loss and technology in public places to be held in Berlin and organized by the German Hearing Loss organization in Berlin?

To explain that I need to tell you a bit about myself:

I have a high frequency hearing loss since childhood and wear hearing aids. I studied in the US and started to realize

that my speech was slipping and speech therapy would again be necessary to get a feeling for the sounds I didn't hear. She introduced me to the hearing loss magazine. The articles gave me the language to understand what I was going through. Two years ago, back in Vienna, I read about a conference that would take place in Paris. I emailed and asked if I could, as an observer, attend that conference. The organizers, BUCODES, sent a friendly letter back, allowing me to attend.

It was a mind-blowing experience for me! I have never met others with hearing loss. The technology, that allowed



speech to text, the audio technology that enabled me to hear the speaker directly was new and exciting. The atmosphere of that conference was amazing.

I sat in front of a woman, who turned out to be the vice president of the German Hearing Loss Association in Berlin. I told her about my bi-lingual background, and that I looking for a new project to plunge into. We met a few times. Renate asked if I would be willing to support her team by taking over the English translations for the Conference scheduled in the Fall of 2017 in Berlin on Hearing technology in Public places. That topic was really interesting so I accepted that challenge.

For a little over a year I would fly to Berlin once a month and attend the day long meeting with the group who were putting together that conference. Those days were very intense but efficient. Each person had his own assignment to develop. Renate oversaw and connected the different projects and kept us all in line. It was quite amazing for me to see how many details were involved in creating such a conference and I was very impressed with the drive and discipline that each person possessed to develop independently their part of the conference. Every detail was laid out, discussed, assigned and most importantly followed up on. Those were numerous from setting up and developing a website to the installation of each cable needed at the venue. My task was translating every section of the website and most correspondence. That entailed the presentation of the conference, description of the agenda and so in both languages for this bi-lingual conference.

Since IFHOH was one of the organizers these meetings I was tasked to protocol these in English. (After the last one, I celebrated!)

Back home, I was kept translating. It was challenging. I spent some time researching not just the topics, linguistic and technical but also some of the idiomatic expressions that Germans but not Austrians use, as well as language differences in British and American writing styles. But it was fun. With practice I was able to work faster which helped because the closer we came to the conference date, the quicker the translations were needed. I had some difficulties with the language dealing with hearing technology and words to identify types of hearing loss. Due to the international group of speakers and attendees that was difficult but I was able to ask one of the DSB and received help. Luckily another volunteer with a technical background was able to translate the more specialized papers of the presenters.

Aside from translating, I helped out organizing a sight seeing event for the Sunday after the end of the conference. Renate connected me with a woman from Berlin who knew the city inside out and had a hearing loss as well. We spent a few extra days in Berlin going through the touristic centers to decide what we would do.

I had visited most of the classic places, and many of the museums, but Sabine was able to tell me stories of some of her own experiences before and after the fall of the



wall. Walking around with her I was able to see Berlin with different eyes. I am very grateful for that experience.

We wanted to do something different. So we decided on a tour of the Bundestag. It took a lot of advance planning, as we had to register each attendee in advance with their full name and birthdate, for an individual tour in English as well as in German using our own support technology.

I arrived a day before the conference started to help with the set up. That involved many repetitive tasks from filling the attendee bags to setting up the tables for registration and technology. I worked together with two women and a man and we were quite an international group; an Israeli living and studying in Berlin, a French woman working for BUCODES, a German working for DSB, and myself, and Austro-American. All of us spoke English and German to different degrees. Three of us had a hearing loss and one grew up with a parent with hearing loss. So we all were somewhat experienced with the issues in communicating with people with hearing loss. But still, it took as a while to find the right communication tools so that everyone could understand us and we them. Due to the high noise level, I found it easier to have each person write their name down as oral communication was difficult and reading lips of people from different nationalities and meeting for the first time is really not possible.

Unfortunately due to a terrible storm delaying and cancelling trains and planes, many people arrived late. Even worse: our speech to text translators cancelled. So new translators had to be found. I was impressed how the DSB conference organizers pulled together got the conference going. Even with this technical handicap at the beginning everyone was understanding making the atmosphere warm and friendly.

Friday and Saturday were long days but due to the amazing planning as well as the willingness of everyone to pitch I feel honored to be part of this.. There was a mishap with the busses for the tour and dinner. It was solved but it took a while however that the evening was a success. I am proud that the atmosphere was so that everyone felt comfortable enough to adjust and "go with the flow".

There have been some very complimentary letters and comments so I can say that the conference was a success. As a person with a hearing loss I learned that I have the responsibility to advocate technical availability in public places.

People with hearing loss have been neglected in the development of barrier free public places and I think this conference helps establish the necessity of just such available technology. The IFHOH and DSB Conference statement includes the following:

"Many hearing-aids and cochlear-implants include the proven telecoil technology that works with hearing loops in large venues. Therefore, hearing loops are recommended in any large venue to provide accessibility for hard of hearing persons. As well, the Telecoil has to be included and activated in every hearing aid and to work in parallel to any new technology."

I have since I started being more aware and ask wherever I am, whether in the bank or at a cultural center or any public place, do you have a working loop?

I can hear you better when I have this availability.



A Focus on **Excellence** in **Audiology**

Last year, EFHOH entered into formal discussions with the organisers of 'European Audiologist of the Year'. Having been involved in the development of the European Standard on services offered by hearing aids professionals, as well as consulting with the Association of Hearing Aids Professionals on their Code of Conduct, it was a natural step forward to look at the newest collaboration. The competition has recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary, and we were very pleased to be part of judging panel. It has given us great insights, reading the entries and how dedicated audiologists can create positive change for hard of hearing people. In other words, EFHOH's focus on access to hearing aids (as well as a high standard for quality of hearing care) has been very much reflected by the hard of hearing people views shared in the entries.

The event took place on 18th October, during the EUHA Congress held every year in Germany and we were invited to the prestigious Museum of Industrial Culture, surrounded by amazing inventions of the industrial era.

It was a great privilege to hand over the trophy to British audiologist Robert Beiny and to talk about winning the award, what it meant to him and the person who nominated him. Robert has dealt with many different issues, including sudden deafness. He is currently supporting different initiatives locally, such as rehabilitation after receiving hearing aids. You can see the video that has now been released on YouTube.

So, what next? Please visit the 'Audiologist of the Year' website and support it by taking part! If you have an amazing audiologist you wish to be recognised, then please fill in the entry in their name. What a great way to be recognised! The search for the Audiologist of the Year will start in January 2018!

The following day, I represented EFHOH at the Annual General Assembly of 'Hear-it' where we discussed topics related to statistics, World Health Assembly Resolution on

Hearing Loss and different ways of reaching out to people who experience hearing loss. The website is maintained in most popular languages such as English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese.

The next EUHA and European Audiologist of the Year annual gathering will take place in October 2018 in Hannover.

Lidia Best
EFHOH Vice President



NEWS RELEASE - September, 2017

TOP AUDIOLOGIST SCOOPS PRESTIGIOUS EUROPEAN AWARD

A dedicated hearing care professional has been recognised for his outstanding work in the hearing industry, scooping a prestigious European award.

Robert Beiny, an audiologist at the Hearing Healthcare Practice in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, claimed the coveted title of European Audiologist of the Year (AOTY) 2017, just weeks after being announced as the UK Audiologist of the Year, beating off stiff competition from seven countries across Europe.

The AOTY judges were particularly inspired by the impact Robert Beiny has had, and continues to have, on his patient Christine's life over the past 15 years. Without Robert's support, Christine, who has severe to profound hearing loss in both ears, believes she wouldn't be where she is today after a successful 46 year career in public service and living life to the full.

Christine, who nominated Robert for the prestigious award, said: "For 15 years, Robert has managed to keep pace with my hearing loss by fitting me with the latest aids that have given me an edge in the hearing world."

When circumstances changed in her career Christine was referred to Robert by her NHS audiologist to see if anything further could be done to help her. She was reluctant

at first but, after their first meeting, she was fitted with the latest technology and hasn't looked back since.

Christine says: "I still remember my first impressions of how kind, sympathetic, calm, reassuring, competent and knowledgeable Robert was and, 15 years on, I can certainly say that impression was spot on.

"I think the most important thing he gave me on that first outing was hope. He kitted me out with two brilliant radio aids and radio mics, and, using his vast network of contacts he managed to come up with a way to connect my aids to the office phone system – 15 years ago, this was breaking new ground. What a difference! I could hear things I hadn't heard for 20 years – blackbirds, trickling water, and crucially, my clients! Thanks to Robert, I took a new job and haven't looked back since.

"Over the years, Robert has kept me kitted out with the best technology to offset my increasing deafness. I look at him and his staff as friends, not just hearing aid providers. His main driver is the pleasure of being able to help people. He also donates to deaf charities regularly and even runs lip-speaking classes for free. I can't tell you how many things I can still enjoy thanks to him."

Now in its 10th year, the Audiologist of the Year competition – which is run in partnership between Rayovac, a world leading hearing aid battery manufacturer and a division of Spectrum Brands Inc., Audio Infos, a leading international hearing publication for the audiology industry, the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA) and the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) - celebrates the exceptional work of hearing care professionals across Europe.

An independent judging panel of industry professionals worked throughout the summer to whittle down the anonymous entries and find a worthy winner from the hundreds of entries from across the UK, Ireland, Austria, France, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands.

Each nominee is scored on the dedication, commitment, knowledge and levels of care demonstrated in their patient's entry. A winner is selected from each of the participating countries in September, with one of these going on to be crowned European champion.

Robert Beiny picked up his award during Rayovac's annual Evening of Excellence, held during the EUHA congress in Germany this October.

Speaking about his award win, Robert Beiny commented; "I'm stunned and honored to have won the European Audiologist of the Year Award. It's particularly exciting to be recognised in the Award's 10th anniversary year. But this Award is really not just about one person, it's recognition of the ethos of my whole team at the Hearing Healthcare Practice.

"What also makes these Awards so special is that they are nominated by patients. And I'm so proud to see that what really comes across reading their kind words is that it's our caring approach, our desire to innovate and our unwavering positivity that sets us apart. It's not simply about the amazing technology we have access to, our work encompasses so much more, and it's why we all love what we do and the lifelong relationships our work inspires.

"Finally I'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to Christine and all the patients who nominated us. Without their trust and belief, we couldn't achieve the amazing and life changing results we do."

Paula Brinson-Pyke, Marketing Director at Rayovac, said: "The Audiologist of the Year competition is one of the highlights of the Rayovac calendar and it's great to be able to give these outstanding professionals something back for their commitment and dedication to patients. Each year we are taken aback by the number of heart-warming hearing stories we receive from people across Europe.

"Audiologists such as Robert and all of our country finalists are leading the way in raising the benchmark of care in the hearing industry across Europe. We wholeheartedly congratulate Robert and all of the 10th anniversary country winners and our thanks go to all of the patients who took time to nominate their hearing professional."

Morgan Potier, Audiologist at Laboratoire d'Audiologie Clinique (LAC), has also been highly commended at a European level following being announced as the 2017 French Audiologist of the Year.

Other country winners who were in the running for the European title were:

Morgan Potier, France
Haluk Celik, Germany
Yvonne Doyle, Ireland
Erwin Lobato, Netherlands
Sebastian Bernal Zafra, Spain
Herdis Menhardt, Austria

For regular updates on this year's Audiologist of the Year competition, visit www.audiologistoftheyear.co.uk, follow Rayovac on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/HearwithRayovac](https://twitter.com/HearwithRayovac) or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Hearing-withRayovac.

Call for the EFHOH board elections 2018

25th, October, 2017



Dear General members of EFHOH,

The new board of EFHOH will be elected in the EFHOH Annual General Meeting (AGM), Saturday morning, May 12th, 2018 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The nomination committee needs formal proposals from the member organizations for the positions of the board:

a. candidates to the board:

Vice President & Board member

All possible candidates must be nominated by a general member organization of EFHOH. A current EFHOH board member can be re-elected, but he/she has to officially communicate with his/her own general member organization about his/her availability of re-election.

The EFHOH Statutes state among others:

The Board consists of President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Treasurer and one Board member. Board members must be of age and qualified to act. The majority of the board members must be hard of hearing themselves and have to be a member of EFHOH general organization. Board members will be elected by a majority vote for a period of two years and can be re-elected.

The present Board comprises:

President:	Marcel Bobeldijk (The Netherlands)
Vice-President:	Lidia Best (United Kingdom)
General-Secretary:	Aida Regel Poulsen (Denmark)
Treasurer:	Darja Pajk (Slovenia)
Board Member:	Juha Hietala (Finland)

b. Candidates to be the chair of the nomination committee.

Candidates must be nominated by a general member organization of EFHOH. The chair of the nomination committee can be re-elected, but he/she has to officially communicate with his/her own general member organization about his/her availability of re-election.

The statutes of EFHOH state among others:

Members of nomination Committee must be of age and qualified to act.

The nomination committee should be composed of at least three members. None of the members of nomination committee can be of the same nationality. Members of the nomination committee cannot be candidates in the board election.

Please send information of candidates at the latest by February 15th 2018, to my e-mail address zdravka.bastijan@hsgn.hr

Kind regards

Chair EFHOH Nomination Committee
Zdravka Bastijan



COMMITTED TO CONNECTING THE WORLD

September 2016 - Joint Coordinating Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors meeting (ITU-T JCA-AHF) EFHOH at International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Since last year, EFHOH started close cooperation with International Communication Union (ITU).

You may remember our communications in relation to interference issues possibly affecting hard of hearing people using Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) and how sales of new mobile networks can potentially affect us. Since we were active on this issue at the European level with EHIMA (European Association of Hearing Aids Manufacturers) and AEA (European Association of Hearing Aids Professionals), we have been invited to attend working meetings at ITU. It is not the first time EFHOH is involved in development of standards. We were previously involved with European Standard on Services offered by Hearing Aids professionals.

We received an invitation to bring our input to develop international standards. This has been quite natural step forward. At the ITU, persons with disabilities are represented through Global Initiative for Inclusive ICT (G3ict), a full Member of ITU. Since I became their consultant, EFHOH has been able to make direct contributions and

propose new work on standards. Andrea Saks, who is the Head of G3ict delegation to ITU has been this year's keynote speaker at our joint conference with NADP in London. EFHOH has been active in the development of Safe Listening Recommendations, which will become an international standard in joint cooperation of the UN organizations of WHO and ITU. In the past we have taken part in the development of the EU Directive and the standard on safety levels of music players that are sold in EU.

Currently, ITU-T is looking to develop a new Standard called Remote Captioning Standard. It is important development, which will help everyone from organisers of events to providers of programs and films; and to those who actually need captioning themselves. With the small number of speech to text reporters available to support us, remote captioning is presenting the opportunity for better inclusion, especially in countries where such services are not available. With increasing involvement and awareness of the importance of captioning, there is a pressure to provide accessibility especially in the area international advocacy. This is vital in exchanges where English is so the called "working language" during proceedings.

Lastly, following the International Conference on Hearing Loops and Technology in Berlin, we are now working closely with experts to bring new, improved standards on hearing loops and assistive listening devices.

It is important to add that ITU is a UN Agency and has been working hard to make sure that persons with disabilities are involved in the development of standards from the beginning. The wonderful work and encouragement of Andrea Saks, who supports all persons with disabilities

from G3ict as well as fantastic support from staff at ITU secretariat is a testament to that commitment. I am truly excited by the opportunities that have opened up for us!

Lidia Best
EFHOH Vice President
Consultant for G3ict



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With 60 years' experience and more than 5,700 specialist centres in 20 countries, we're the world's leading dedicated hearing aid specialist.

All our hearing care is tailored to each person's hearing and life-style needs and is delivered by professionally qualified hearing aid audiologists.

From our comprehensive hearing assessment to your programme of Free Lifetime Aftercare, we are committed to help you get the very best from your hearing.

EFHOH website - redesigned and relaunched

We have launched the newly redesigned website with a fresh contemporary look and improved navigation.

www.efhoh.org

The new site includes integrated social media buttons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn on the News from EFHOH posts for you to share.

Hire an EFHOH speaker!

Invite us to talk. We can travel to your event to present and share our work and lobbying experiences.

We may present about IFHOH Human Rights Toolkit and Prague Declaration, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including our subtitling lobbying work.

EFHOH representatives will never charge for their presentations, however we may request for travel and accommodation to be covered by the inviting party.

Please contact us at office@efhoh.org



***“Staying **connected,**
informed and
empowered”***

The 2017 NADP conference was held the 6th of May at the Friends House in London. It was an exceptional event as it was a joint conference with the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH).

More than 120 people, from all over Europe, including UK audience, gathered in these premises to listen to and exchange on very seminal issues for Hard of hearing people, whether they live in UK, Europe or even US:

The program was organised around 3 different topics:

- Hearing loss and implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities
- Media accessibility
- Hearing care and technology

Each topic was presented through 2 to 4 talks, from national and international perspectives, followed by questions and answers with the public.

It was indeed a very impressive and ambitious programme, which could have easily overwhelmed and confused the audience.

However, the quality of the speakers their knowledge and experience in their respective field, their pragmatic approach and ability to address the public, and their enthusiasm and dedication for their subject and work took us through this intense day and gave us the means and the keys to apprehend each of these topics with serenity and pleasure, opening perspectives and lines of actions in our daily life as well as involvement in volunteer work. None of this would have been accessible without the quality of the loop, the endeavour of the palantypists and lip speakers. The first topic of the day "Hearing loss and implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities" was presented through 3 talks: one delivered by Dr Laszlo Lovaszy (Rapporteur for Technology and ethical issues, Committee Member of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)), the second one delivered by Andrea Saks (Chairman of the International Telecommunication Union JCA-AHF); the 3rd one was delivered by Sarah Herrlinger, Senior Accessibility Manager at Apple. Dr Laszlo Lovaszy offered us a short presentation on "the evolving concept of disability" since the creation of the UNCRDP 10 years ago and the consequences of this protean concept when implementing the rights of persons with disabilities.

Then Andrea Saks told us the incredible story (battle) of how the first phone for Deaf people was launched and how it opened tremendous possibilities for this community to communicate across continents; how also, following bad advice, the British system was upgraded for a non-compatible system and how British community was cut out from their counterparts in US; how then the fight for a standard

started and resulted in the very first International accessibility standard was created in 1995.

In a couple of minutes, not only did Ms Saks convince me of the seminal value of standards, international standards, but also, and maybe above all, she has given me a lesson through her energy and enthusiasm to never give up. It may not have been the purpose of her presentation, but I can't help thinking that, in some way, it has been a very empowering presentation.

Sarah Herrlinger stepped in to present the developments made by Apple to equip each of the company devices with assistive technology. The presentation focused on the iPhone, but the iPad is also equipped with these features. In brief, the iPhone is equipped with visible and vibrating alerts for messages; it is also equipped with FaceTime, combined with high quality video to make this communication way even more accessible; messages with iMessages are standard as well as captions and subtitles; Furthermore, Apple has worked with manufacturers such as ReSound to develop "Made for iPhone" hearing aids. Settings are then adjustable from the screen of your iPhone, whether you wish to adjust the volume, or check the battery; even better, you can also adjust environmental pre-sets from your iPhone and in one click your hearing aids adjust to the environment (e.g. going outdoors or entering a noisy location); and, lastly your iPhone can also be used as assisting technology to hear clearly voices in a noisy environment: by selecting the Live Listen program on your iPhone, your phone becomes a micro which receives sound and transmits to your hearing aids via blue tooth, reducing back ground noise and voice distortion. No need to say that the interest, enthusiasm, of the audience was palpable and the questions fused after the presentation.

Beyond the marvels of such clever devices, I think this short presentation has also emphasised 2 serious issues: the pace of technology development is such that it is very difficult for individuals to keep up with it and benefit from it; I do wish that information was communicated more systematically to individuals; the second issue is related to the access to technology developments within the NHS provision; couldn't the user be offered information about and choice of hearing aids which are compatible and up to date with the current evolution of assistive technology? Does anyone realise that the first successful step of rehabilitation is to involve the user in the process?

Following a short break, we then embarked on the second topic of the day "Media accessibility".

2 presentations illustrated this topic; the first one was delivered by David Bradshaw (Digital TV Group -Accessibility Group), "DTG, involvement of user's representatives at Digital TV Group Accessibility workgroup" and the second one was delivered by Gareth Ford Williams (BBC digital -



Head of Accessibility, User experience and design), "BBC work on accessibility".

David Bradshaw told us how important it was to have users' representatives within the Accessibility Group and how their involvement shapes the quality and accuracy of the recommendations made by this group.

Gareth Ford Williams spoke about work of his department to provide perfect accessibility to any type of users. His presentation turned indeed like a firework on accessibility! Ideas, projects, achievements, all were fused through a very dynamic and enthusiastic presentation. I never ever thought that behind the subtitles on my TV there could be such energy and curiosity!

Every little bit of subtitles is scrutinised for improvement! Whether regarding accuracy, position on the screen, reading rate, etc. The latest development the team has come up is a "time machine" as they call it to suppress the very annoying time lag between sound and subtitles. By a sort of magic trick which consists of broadcasting the same program twice within few seconds (don't ask me the technical details, it is far too complicated for me) subtitles, images and sounds will appear on TV all synchronised!

The audience was enraptured and many suggested a visit to the BBC research lab and development premises. I do hope this will happen as the presentation was just a glimpse of the extraordinary work led by Gareth's team.

It was indeed a very informative morning. I didn't know that there were so many organisations and bodies which are working so hard to define, implement and guard the legal requirements to support people with disabilities. I have been delighted to see such enthusiasm, energy and endeavour to provide better access, to empower individuals; I am also very impressed by the successful efforts to involve users in developments and policies. BBC Accessibility team and DTG – accessibility group have recognised the seminal values of end users input. Both experiences have proven to be very successful. I wish such examples would convince decision makers to rely on a systematic and significant involvement of the end users and avoid decision making with a partial view leading to negative consequences.

After a well-deserved break, some lunch and very interesting chats about Hard of Hearing issues in other counties and countries, we all came back for the 3rd topic of the day "Hearing care and technology".

4 speakers had been invited for this topic: Lidia Best (Chairman – NADP) offered us a quick update with "Report into deafened people's experiences in Europe"; Brian Lamb (Alliance on Hearing Loss and deafness) presented the "Action Plan on Hearing loss"; Soren Hougaard (Secretary General - EHIMA) spoke about "Hearing aids now and in future"; and Mark Laureyns (AEA) argued how "Quality on hearing care matter".

Let's be honest, it was all getting quite tiring, and the attention was slowing down.



It was without counting on the strength and stamina of the members of this panel! Sue Archbold who was chairing and facilitating this topic had a lively role to play to keep everything on track! And yes, considering the reactions, questions and comments of the public, quality of hearing care does matter!

Lidia Best gave us a quick Report on Survey into deafened people's experiences in Europe, based upon responses collected through a survey led by EFHOH and NADP at the beginning of this year. It appears that medical and immediate support for people who experience sudden hearing loss is not widely provided. This emphasises, if needed, the general misunderstanding of the effects and consequences on individuals of this condition.

Brian Lamb presented the "Action Plan on Hearing Loss". Part of this Action plan is to implement with NHS a framework for Adult Hearing services.

This framework aims at supporting adult with hearing loss in getting help, getting the appropriate information where and when they need it; support the persons in the long process of adapting to Hearing Aids and getting the follow up and adjustment appointments when needed; encourage the individuals to give feedback and get involved in the development of this plan. I am glad that user involvement will actively be encouraged and wider support will be implemented, hopefully, across audiology services. I really do hope this will provide us with a consistent and reliable hearing care service across UK. I however regret that such plan is not widely advertised within audiology services to

inform the end users of what's going on regarding the care they will receive. From my point of view, the communication is an on-going issue for the end users. Not everybody can or wish to get actively involved in associations to get information they are entitled to be systematically given and once again I wish that medical services, association, charities and national bodies were more active in their actions to keep users informed.

Mark Laureyns raised his concern on the imminent legalisation in the US of the sales of over the counter hearing aids. These devices can now be bought without any consultation with credentialed dispenser, not even medical examination. These devices are nothing more than amplifier designed for hearing people. Even more worrying is the fact that AEA at the request from EFHOH has analysed 27 of these devices and all of them had unsafe noise levels. This led to a report which is now used by both organisations to raise concerns and influence future regulations. I am indeed really shocked by such decision. Here, legalisation made without any regard to the numerous evidences which have demonstrated the prevalence of hearing care in the provision of assistive technology. Such denial confines to dismissal in my opinion. I regret to see that we are still there regarding hearing loss after so many years of battles for recognition.

Soren Hougaard answered to this concern by suggesting a concerted deployment for this legalisation where users, retailers and health services would combine their efforts to provide safe and adequate devices to individuals, responding to the specific needs of each one and providing necessary support and follow up. But this requires a very proactive mobilisation of all the parties concerned to minimise the disaster of such legalisation.

European legislation prevents such legalisation on this side of the Atlantic. However, the UK will have to review its own legislation following Brexit. Let's hope that the decision makers won't be tempted to apply such framework in a vain attempt to reduce costs.

The day closed on a very quick presentation by Paula Brinson Pyke on the Audiologist of the Year competition supported by EFHOH.

We then joined all together at the Ambassadors Bloomsbury Hotel for the gala dinner. In a very relaxing atmosphere we shared comments and experiences with our European peers, comparing the differences in hearing care across Europe, exchanging contacts and hoping to see each other at the next conference.

Emmanuelle Blondiaux-Ding
National Association of Deafened People Board Member

*This article was recently published in Network, a magazine of National Association of Deafened People



4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities

Disability rights at the heart of the European Union

6 December 2017 | More than 600 persons with disabilities from all over Europe are meeting today at the European Parliament to engage in dialogue with European leaders concerning their rights.

The 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities (EPPD) is a landmark event marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December) and the 20th anniversary of EDF. EDF was created in 1997 to ensure that decisions concerning persons with disabilities are taken with persons with disabilities, through their active involvement in policy and decision-making. This is the basis of our motto 'nothing about us without us'.

The discussions taking place at the EPPD are focusing specifically on the right of persons with disabilities to vote and participate in political and public life, the next European Disability Strategy and the European Union (EU) being a global leader on inclusive Sustainable Development.

The President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, and EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis, are opening the EPPD.

President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, stated: "Our commitment to improve the lives of persons with disabilities is founded in our values as Europeans, including our attachment to freedom, equality and inclusion of all individuals in society. These values have to be translated into concrete actions, to enable every person to live an independent life, and to make sure that our society empowers everyone."

EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis, stated: "Today we show a European Parliament close to its citizens. The EPPD is another milestone in the dialogue between EU elected representatives and citizens with disabilities. Throughout all EDF existence, the European Parliament has always been a strong and vocal defender of the human rights of persons with disabilities. Over the last two legislatures, the European Parliament promoted and protected the rights of persons with disabilities during legislation negotiations on the right to equal access to the internet, to transport or to independent living, as well as on the structural funds – in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)".



During the EPPD, a manifesto on European elections 2019 will be adopted by the delegates calling on the EU leaders to ensure that the upcoming European elections are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. The right to political participation and the right to vote are enshrined in the CRPD that the EU and all its Member States -except Ireland- have ratified. However, in reality hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities in Europe are deprived from exercising this fundamental right. Women with disabilities, people with disabilities living in institutions and people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities are at even higher risk of being excluded.

Delegates with disabilities will also adopt a resolution on the next European Disability Strategy. During EU's review in 2015, the CRPD Committee recommended the EU to "adopt a strategy on the implementation of the CRPD with the allocation of a budget, a time frame for implementation and monitoring mechanism". Thus, the resolution is calling on the EU leaders to adopt a European Disability Strategy 2020-2030 that will cover all provisions of the CRPD. The Strategy should include 2021 as the next European Year of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Moreover, participants will discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the importance of taking people with disabilities on board in their implementation. Five of the SDGs are directly mentioning disability: goal 4 on quality education, goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, goal 10 on reduced inequalities, goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities and goal 17 on partnerships for the goals.

"It is crucial that the EU implements the SDGs and keep up to the commitment to leave no one behind. No person with disability should be forgotten, including those in more vulnerable situations such as women, children and refugees with disabilities", says EDF Vice President, Ana Peláez Narváez.

Finally, delegates will also adopt an emergency resolution on the European Accessibility Act. The resolution is calling on the Council of the EU to live up to its obligations

to implement the CRPD and to adopt an ambitious and forward-looking General Approach to the European Accessibility Act at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting on 7 December 2017.

EDF members have worked closely with their MEPs, including members of the European Parliament's Disability Intergroup to ensure that the 4th EPPD is the most inclusive, diverse European gathering of persons with disabilities which has ever taken place at the EU level. It comes at a crucial time for the EU, when belief of Europeans in the European project is weakening; EDF is coming together with its members to tell Europe's leaders about the kind of Europe we want. A Europe of human rights and social participation for all.

The EPPD is live web streamed at the European Parliament's TV as well as through EDF website.

Follow all discussions on EDF Facebook and Twitter pages using the hashtag: #EPdisability

Photos will be uploaded on EDF Facebook page.



European Days of Persons with Disabilities 2017: Towards an inclusive, social and sustainable Europe

The European Days of Persons with Disabilities brought together hundreds of persons with disabilities and it was an occasion to celebrate diversity and social inclusion.

As every year around the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December), the European Commission and EDF co-organised a two-day conference in Brussels on 4-5 December 2017.

Persons with disabilities discussed citizenship, political participation, sustainable development and urban accessibility with the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament, the Council, public authorities and other stakeholders and experts.

Opening the conference, Michel Servoz, European Commission Director General, talked about inequalities that still persist in Europe giving the example of the high unemployment rate for people with disabilities: "The employment rate of people with disabilities is only 48% and only 28% of people with disabilities have finished tertiary education. This gap is huge and is not acceptable."

Speaking at the opening, EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis, stated: "To be a citizen means to be able to exercise rights, to be part of society and not to be in the corner of it. And this is what we fight for". Yannis Vardakastanis also referred to the European Pillar of Social Rights (Social Pillar) as a tool for the European Union (EU) to fulfil its commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

"The CRPD addresses all levels and areas of policy making. The EU should, therefore, adopt an overarching and comprehensive European Disability Strategy 2020-2030 to make CRPD a reality in Europe with the active involvement of persons with disabilities. The Strategy should be integrated in the forthcoming EU Multiannual Financial Framework to ensure adequate funds for its implementation", added Yannis Vardakastanis.

[Read more on EDF's website](#)

Access City Awards

An important moment of the conference was the Ceremony of the Access City Award on the second day. This is the European prize that rewards cities for their efforts in becoming accessible to all. The awards were given to the representatives of the winning cities by the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, and EDF Vice-President, Ana Peláez. The Commissioner also addressed EDF and gave her congratulations to EDF's 20th anniversary.

The winner of 2018 Access City Award is: Lyon (France). The 2nd prize went to Ljubljana (Slovenia) and the 3rd prize to the City of Luxembourg (Luxembourg).

A special mention on Accessibility in Historical Settings was given to: Viborg (Denmark).



The **president** of the **German Tinnitus Association** receives the Bavarian **state medal** for **outstanding services** to health and care

Volker Albert, the president of the Deutsche Tinnitus-Liga e. V. (DTL), the German Tinnitus Association, has received the Bavarian state medal for outstanding services to health and care. He received this medal on November, 20th 2017 in Nuremberg, Germany, by State Minister Melanie Huml. The Bavarian state medal is the most important decoration of the Bavarian State Ministry of Health and Care. Volker Albert received the Bavarian state medal because of his outstanding commitment to the people suffering from tinnitus. Volker Albert is the president of the Deutsche Tinnitus-Liga e. V. (DTL) since 2007.



***WHERE AM I – WHERE DO YOU STAND?
(INTERCONNECTING PASTORAL CARE AMONG
HARD OF HEARING)***

**IVSS Churchear Conference 2018 in Strasbourg, France
13th–17th September**

Centre Culturel St. Thomas

IVSS Churchear invites you to a thrilling conference with interesting lecturers and exciting encounters. Our conference theme this time is: **“Where am I – Where do you stand? – Interconnecting Pastoral Care among Hard of Hearing”**

From Romania Professor Jenö Kiss will speak about “contextual pastoral care”, about the importance of how the surroundings for hard of hearing or deaf persons are, such as family, the local and the greater society. Hans-Gunther Seifert, president of the Protestant Pastoral Care among Hard of Hearing in Germany will tell how a German group called “Grenzgänger” (Border crossers) is working, people being insecure about which category they belong to, hard of hearing or deaf. Professor Régine Hunziker-Rodewald from the Protestant Theological Faculty of Strasbourg will give us a Biblical view on the topic “Hearing and being heard”. There will be workshops as well, giving us the opportunity to exchange our experiences, learn from each other and get a renewed inspiration for our daily work.

And, not the least, we will come together with all our accumulated experience from being fellow wanderers together with hearing impaired members of our churches. Some of us are hard of hearing ourselves; others are hearing well. All of us have something to learn from each other. We therefore have, as always, emphasised on having time for encounters and exchange of experience. If you are not yet a member of IVSS Churchear, you are welcome to apply for a membership. And if you are simply curious wishing to attend our conference, you are most welcome as well. Together we can make the world a little better.

Ingrid Stillström, President

The registration should be sent by **May 1st 2018** to

Katharina Nitschke, Schiller-Str. 29

DE-39218 SCHÖNEBECK (ELBE) , GERMANY

You may also register at our web site: **www.chuchear.org**

or by email: **rk.nitschke@t-online.de**

Total cost per person 450,- €, including the conference fee and accommodation in double rooms with toilet and bathroom, meals and sightseeing bus in Strasbourg.

Bank account number: 18244 at Union-Bank AG, Flensburg

Bank guide number 21520100

IBAN: DE66 2152 0100 0000 018244 SWIFT (BIC): UNBNDE21

The Conference address:

Centre Culturel Saint-Thomas

2 Rue de la Carpe Haute, FR-67000 STRASBOURG, France



REGISTRATION

I shall attend the International Conference of IVSS-Churchear in Strasbourg September 13th– 17th 2018.

Name

Organisation/Country

Address

Telephone

Mobile Email

Workshop Saturday Sunday (write number)

Food: Normal Vegetarian.....

Special requests (allergies etc.)

I want a single room, paying therefore an extra € 50 (Yes/No)

I want to share double room with

I want all the lectures on a CD in English and German for € 1 (Yes/No)

I have transferred € 150,- to the account of IVSS-Churchear in Flensburg (It is of course possible to transfer the whole fee as well) (Amount)

DateSignature.....



Werner Bütikofer, presenting the new neckloop for Nokia mobile phones at a meeting of BSSV in Thun, Switzerland in 1998 (Photo Siegfried Karg)

In memoriam Werner Bütikofer (1937-2017)

IFHOH Europe President from 1993 to 1997

On June 30, 2017, friends and family gathered to say goodbye to Werner Bütikofer, who had passed away in Olten, Switzerland, on June 14th, shortly after his 80th birthday. The funeral service, held in the Swiss Reformed Church of Olten, was attended by many of his longtime friends from the hearing loss community. IFHOH and EFHOH were represented by Siegfried Karg (EFHOH Vice President from 2002-2010).

Werner Bütikofer was born on May 22, 1937 in Rapperswil BE, Switzerland, and held different positions before he was elected CEO of the Swiss Hearing Loss Association BSSV (now pro audito Switzerland) in 1974. He remained at the helm of the Association until his retirement in 2001. In addition to his work for the hard of hearing people of Switzerland, Werner was also engaged internationally. When the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) was founded in 1977, Werner was instrumental in creating this new organization.

As CEO of BSSV, together with his team, Werner organized the Third International Congress for Hard of Hearing People in Montreux, Switzerland, in 1988. People who attended this congress continued in their praise of it long after its conclusion.

With the founding of the European Union it was deemed beneficial to have a European section of IFHOH with the hope of gaining financial support from the EU for the Euro-

pean work for people with disabilities. As a result, IFHOH Europe was founded.

In 1993 Werner became President of IFHOH Europe (now the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People EFHOH) until 1997, handing over the presidency to Christina Wahrolin from Sweden, and continuing as its Vice President (1997-2002).

At the IFHOH Congress in Graz, Austria, in 1996, Werner, as President of IFHOH Europe, presented a draft version of the conference resolution, which was discussed, amended, and passed by the delegates.

One of Werner's lasting legacies is the specific symbol for hard of hearing people which was adopted by IFHOH and is still used on its website www.ifhoh.org today. The symbol was originally designed by the Swiss graphic designer Fred Bauer of Küsnacht-Zürich for BSSV.

We are grateful to Werner Bütikofer for his tireless efforts on behalf of hard of hearing people and his dedication to EFHOH and IFHOH. Our sympathy goes out to his family.

Siegfried Karg, Winterthur, Switzerland

IFHOH Conference: **"Accessibility removes all barriers"** together with **IFHOH BGM** (Biennial General Meeting) and **EFHOH AGM** (Annual General Meeting) 10-12 May 2018 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Thursday 10.May 2018 – IFHOH and EFHOH Board Meetings, guided tour and reception

08.00 - 15.30 IFHOH Board Meeting
15.30 - 17.00 EFHOH Board Meeting
17.00 - 19.00 Guided tour of Ljubljana
19.00 - IFHOH Conference Reception

9.00 – 9.10

Program presentation and directions for the rest of the day

9.10. – 9.30

Welcoming speeches

9.30 – 11.15

Legal bases in Slovenia and the European Union

10.50 – 11.15

Discussion and conclusions

11.15 – 11.35

Coffee break

11.35 – 13.00

Psychological aspect of hearing impairment

12.50 – 13.00

Discussion and conclusions

13.00 – 15.00

Lunch break

15.00 – 16.30

Accessibility removes all barriers

Friday 11.May 2018 - Conference: "Accessibility removes all barriers"

08.00 - 09.00

Registration

09.00 - 09.10

Program presentation and directions for the rest of the day

09.10 - 09.30

Welcoming speeches

09.30 - 17.00

Educational part, coffee breaks and lunch

18.00 -

Festive dinner and socializing

•

Topic A: Medical rehabilitation

•

Topic B: Psychosocial rehabilitation

16.20 – 16.30

Discussion and conclusions

16.30

Press Conference - Press release with conclusions of the Conference

18.00 -

Festive dinner and socializing

Saturday 12.May 2018 IFHOH BGM and EFHOH AGM

08.30 - 12.00

EFHOH AGM (+Registration, coffee breaks)

12.00 - 13.30

lunch

13.30 - 17.00

IFHOH BGM (+Registration, coffee breaks)

IFHOH conference:

"Accessibility removes all barriers"

Friday 11.May 2018, at 9.00 AM in hall of the M Hotel

Program

8.00 – 9.00

Arrival and registration

DOES EVERYONE IN EUROPE HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE?

Millions of Europeans with disabilities are excluded from this fundamental right. The right to political participation and the right to vote are fundamental rights for all citizens. They are at the heart of democracy and citizenship. They are also rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) that the European Union (EU) and all its Member States (except Ireland) have ratified, meaning they are obliged to make it happen for all their citizens with disabilities. In reality, however, millions of people with disabilities in Europe are deprived from exercising this fundamental right. Women with disabilities, people with disabilities living in institutions and people with less visible disabilities, such as intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, are at even higher risk of being excluded.

This crucial issue was discussed extensively during EDF's Board meeting which took place in Estonia, hosted by the Estonian Chamber of the Disabled People and supported by the Estonian Presidency of the EU. EDF members exchanged their experiences and knowledge concerning the situation on the right to vote in their countries.

Even if people with disabilities have the legal right to vote in some countries, lack of accessibility makes it impossible for them in practice. There are often inaccessible polling stations, lack of documents and information in accessible formats such as Braille, Sign Language or Easy-To-Read, complicated processes, lack of awareness about disability and accessibility etc.

The UN Committee which monitors the work that EU and its Member States do to implement the CRPD has repeatedly pointed out the violation of the right to political participation and the right to vote for persons with disabilities in most EU Member States. In some countries around the world, it sometimes took a court decision for public authorities to finally start revising the legislation and stop voting discrimination.

In view of the upcoming European elections in 2019, EDF is campaigning for the right to political participation and the right to vote. We call on the European Parliament and all governments in Europe to revise their laws and procedures to ensure that all people with disabilities to exercise their right to vote and stand for elections, like everyone else.

EDF is working closely with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) providing input for a report that EESC prepares on this topic. EESC rapporteur of this report, Krzysztof Pater, attended EDF board in Estonia and presented the work made on the report so far.



"The right to vote is not only a fundamental right, but also an issue of dignity", Krzysztof Pater said underlining that discrimination occurs when some citizens have full rights and others partial rights.

EESC rapporteur also asked EDF members to provide EESC with their expertise in order to have a rich report that shows the real situation on the right to vote in Europe. Krzysztof Pater plans to adopt his report early 2018.

THE 4TH EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Political participation and the right to vote will also be the theme of the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities (EPPD), which will take place on 6 December 2017 in the European Parliament in Brussels. This is a landmark event organised by EDF and the European Parliament which will bring together hundreds of delegates of representative organisations of persons with disabilities from all over Europe, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and high level representatives of other EU institutions.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CRUCIAL VOTE ON ACCESSIBILITY ACT

The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voted today in plenary session on the proposed amendments to the Accessibility Act. The Parliament adopted its final position before starting the negotiations with the Council. EDF and its members had campaigned to convince the MEPs to listen to the voices of their citizens and adopt an ambitious Accessibility Act.



We will take the time to examine the amendments and the final text and come back with a thorough analysis. In the meantime, this is a short update on the five top priorities we campaigned for:

1. Applicability of the Accessibility Act to other Union acts such as public procurement or the EU Structural Funds (Article 1(3)).

This point was adopted and its scope was also widened compared to the European Commission's initial proposal; now all EU legislation mentioning accessibility should be aligned with the accessibility requirements of the Accessibility Act.

2. Adoption of a strong, binding clause on the built environment (Article 3(10)).

This point was adopted meaning that the accessibility requirements of the Accessibility Act will apply not only on products and services but also on the built environment around them, e.g. not only a cash machine should be made accessible, but also the building of the bank in which the cash machine is in. However, this applies only to new and renovated buildings concerning banking, telephony and transport services.

3. Application of accessibility requirements by microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Art. 12)

This point was rejected. Microenterprises will be excluded from the Act and they won't have to make their products and services (such as e-commerce and e-books) accessible. Concerning SMEs, they should notify the authorities in case their products and services are not accessible.

4. Transport accessibility

There were some improvements, but some important demands on the definitions were rejected. That means that important modes of transport, such as metros, trams, or local buses, are still excluded from the Act. However, the transport requirements in the Annex I were improved compared to the initial report by the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) and it was confirmed that the main transport accessibility requirements will stay in the Act.

5. Inclusion of sector-specific accessibility requirements

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In this point, there were some improvements. We will give more information on this once we analyse the amendments.

The final report was adopted by 537 MEPs in favour, 89 abstentions and 12 against. Parliament's plenary gave the rapporteur of the Accessibility Act, MEP Morten Lokkegaard, the mandate to start the negotiations with the Council as soon as possible. EDF appreciates the support of all MEPs who voted for the amendments which strengthened the text of the Act.

We regret that several crucial points were left out. We will continue to collaborate with our members in the next stages of the process to make the Act stronger. Follow all updates at @MyEDF and @EDFaccess Twitter accounts using the hashtag: #AccessibilityAct

HOW CAN ACCESSIBILITY BECOME A REALITY FOR ALL PEOPLE IN EUROPE?

Over 100 people took part in the European conference 'The European Accessibility Act – Making full accessibility reality'. The conference took place on 6-7 October 2017 in Estonia hosted by the Estonian Chamber of Disabled People, as part of the Estonian Presidency of the European Union (EU). Persons with disabilities from across Europe and from various local communities in Estonia, representatives of the Estonian government, EU policy makers and the industry were brought together to discuss the content of European Accessibility Act and what it means in practice for people in Europe.

The discussion took place just a few weeks after the European Parliament's crucial vote on the Accessibility Act, which is a proposal for an EU law, aiming at making products and services across the EU accessible for all.

People coming from different regions in Estonia explained why accessibility is important to them and what they need the most in their local communities. They also shared best practices concerning accessibility in their daily lives and they identified the biggest obstacles in making local communities more accessible to all people.

During the discussions, it became clear that accessibility is a precondition to be able to participate in society and enjoy other fundamental rights, such as the right to work,



the right to education etc. However, barriers to accessibility persist in all European countries; this is why we need a strong Accessibility Act.

Even in cases that accessibility is taken into account, this is often not done consistently or not implemented correctly, as another participant underlined: “In my municipality the town hall has an accessible entrance with a ramp and a wide door but then there is no lift to move around inside the building, so I can only be at the basement and I cannot access the services I need in other floors”.

Many commenters also pointed out that while there is often some awareness about accessibility for persons with physical disabilities, such as wheelchair users, many other persons with disabilities such as deaf, blind or deafblind people are often forgotten. The situation is even harder for people with less visible disabilities such as intellectual or psychosocial disabilities.

The importance of the involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organisations was also highlighted: no decision concerning the lives of persons with disabilities should be taken for them without them.

The second part of the conference focused on how the Accessibility Act and other EU legislation could help to fulfill the accessibility needs of local communities in Europe and what the way forward will be.

The negotiations of the European Parliament with the Council concerning the Accessibility Act will start soon. EDF and its members will campaign to make sure that governments in Europe understand the necessity of adopting a strong Accessibility Act.

“We still have some countries in the EU who say that people with disabilities are too expensive for them. Do we see the Accessibility Act as an opportunity for all citizens or just as a burden we would like to throw out as soon as possible?”, said EDF Secretary, Gunta Anca. She added: “In the past, people thought electricity was expensive and unneeded. I am sure that in the future accessibility and Design For All will be an intrinsic part of our everyday life, like it happened with electricity”.

EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis, said that governments should support a strong Accessibility Act at the negotiations of the Council: “They cannot say they support

accessibility when they talk in their countries, and act differently when they vote at the Council”. EDF President also emphasized that accessibility is a benefit for society and businesses: “They will get back what they invest by reaching more consumers and making their products and services accessible to them. Accessibility is not only a human rights issue and a matter of common sense; it is also a business case”.

COLLOQUIUM OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The European Commission’s Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights took place on 20 and 21 November in Brussels. Hosted by the European Commission First Vice-President, Frans Timmermans, together with Věra Jourova, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality.

This year’s focus was on “women’s rights in turbulent times”. The objective of the Annual Colloquium ‘is to improve mutual cooperation and greater political engagement for the promotion and protection of key fundamental rights in Europe and the world’.

The Colloquium aimed to go beyond the technical discussions on gender equality policies and legislation, and instead place women’s rights in a broader framework of social justice. The Colloquium did not follow the format of a traditional conference with speakers and an audience, but was rather an interactive round-table discussion with a limited number of key stakeholders, aiming at exploring avenues for action.

Members of EDFs women’s committee were invited to participate and were active and vocal at the forum, expressing their views and calling for inclusion of women with disabilities in a range of issues including violence against women with disabilities, their exclusion from public life and political participation, forced sterilisation, accessibility and barriers to education.

It was extremely important for women with disabilities to be present in numbers and it was clear that the issues raised were visible, if we refer, for example, to the social media coverage (see Twitter #EU4women). The Commissioner herself referred in her closing address to women with disabilities and the need to consider all issues of

inter-sectional discrimination in the EU's approach to gender equality.

ACADEMIC NETWORK OF EUROPEAN DISABILITY EXPERTS ANNUAL MEETING

The Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED) invited EDF to participate in its 10th ANED annual meeting, on 17 November in Brussels. The aim of the meeting was to reflect on the last 10 years of ANED work while looking at the challenges ahead.

Participants agreed to work towards a greater cooperation among researchers, public institutions and organisations of persons with disabilities in various fields, including in the implementation of the Social Pillar, the European Semester, EU Funds and disability assessment, and SDGs.

FreedomTech: Action on Accessible Technology

FreedomTech, is a unique partnership between two national disability organisations, the Disability Federation of Ireland and Enable Ireland. FreedomTech aims to ensure that Ireland's 600,000 people with disabilities don't get left behind by the rapid advancements in technological innovation.

FreedomTech hosted its 1st first national assembly on assistive technology (AT) on the 16th November in the Aviva Stadium, Dublin. The FreedomTech Assembly was run with support from Maynooth University and Microsoft.

FUTURE OF EU BUDGET

Together with Civil Society Europe, with SDGs Watch Europe and with the Social Platform, EDF is advocating for a strong social dimension of the next EU budget. This should include funding of civil society organisations, greater percentage of EU budget to be used for structural funds and greater share of these funds to be allocated to fight poverty, to fund equality and social inclusion for all, including persons with disabilities. The European Commission is considering several scenarios regarding how much money and on what priorities the EU should invest. Every country will decide if they want to contribute more or less to the EU budget, therefore you have a key role in putting pressure on your governments to fulfill their obligations under the UN CRPD but also the Pillar of Social Rights and the SDGs.

THE DESIGN FOR ALL STANDARD HAS BEEN APPROVED!

Last week we were informed that the draft European standard PR17161 on "Design for All - Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods and services - Extending the range of users" was approved by the European standards organisations. This European Standard is the main deliverable of the Commission Mandate 473 in which EDF has been involved from the very beginning.

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TOWARDS INCLUSION - A GUIDE FOR ORGANISATIONS AND PRACTITIONERS

A new publication by Light for the World, Mission East and ICCO Cooperation called "TOWARDS INCLUSION - A GUIDE FOR ORGANIZATIONS & PRACTITIONERS" is now available. The three organizations cooperated to record their experiences in a publication which can be used in a variety of relief and development contexts. 'Towards Inclusion' is designed to be an easy to use reference for organizational and program/project development with a focus on gender responsiveness and disability inclusion.

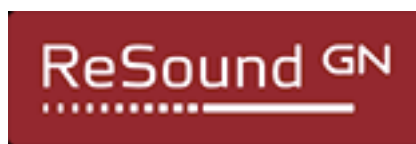
Authored by Vera Van Ek and Sander Schot, 'Towards Inclusion - A Guide for Organizations & Practitioners' is made up of three parts. If you/ your organisation would be interested to participate in trainings or you have comments or questions to the content of the book, please contact us at feedbackACAP@gmail.com.

SOCIEUX+ INITIATIVE

EDF members working in international cooperation might be interested by the SOCIEUX+ initiative. SOCIEUX+ EU expertise on social protection, labour and employment is a technical assistance facility conceived to support partner countries and institutions to better design and manage inclusive, effective, and sustainable employment policies and social protection systems. SOCIEUX+ provides access to short-term high-quality European expertise from peers to peers.

For more information, consult SOCIEUX+ website: www.socieux.eu

EFHOH would like to acknowledge our sponsors generosity in helping us continue our efforts' in European advocacy



EFHOH MEETINGS 2018

2018	2018	2018	2018
2-3 Feb	Ljubljana	EFHOH board meeting	Board
7-8 February	Geneva	WHO Listening Safe Consultation	Lidia
21 February	Brussels	Platform event	Lidia and Marcel
2 March	Geneva	WHO World Hearing Day event	Marcel
6 March	Brussels	World Hearing Day in the EU parliament	Board
18 March	Copenhagen	NHS meeting	Aïda and Marcel
11-12 May	Ljubljana	EFHOH AGM	Board
5 & 6 June	Barcelona	Understanding Quality in Media Accessibility (UFAQ) Conference	Marcel
7-9 June	Lake Como/Italy	Hearing Across the Lifespan (HeAL) conference	One of the board members
17-18 Aug	Stockholm	European Conference of Speech to Text (ECOS)	Aïda
17-19 October	Hannover	Hear-It AGM and 63rd International Congress of Hearing Aid Acousticians	Aïda and Marcel
2019	2019	2019	2019
17-19 June	Stockholm	Media for All conference	Marcel and/or Aïda

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EFHOH - European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People consists of National Associations of/for Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened People, Parents' Organisations and Professional Organisations.

EFHOH comprises the European members of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) and was established in 1993. It has its own board and secretariat. The federation has non-profitable and benevolent aims and it is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation. EFHOH is a general member of the European Disability Forum (EDF). We also work in good co-operation with IFHOH and our official language is English.

The Board members of the EFHOH carry out their work on an honorary basis.